

I could come up here and talk about my life as a single mother of two twice exceptional children.-one with Autism and one with PTSD, both with IQ's of 141 and 138. I could share our story of how we went from tragic victims of domestic violence who were homeless and unemployed to where we are today which is maintaining stability, ^{housing} employment, and finally giving back to other families in the same sorts of circumstances. My family is a walking success story, and I can attribute my success to the hard work of several (mostly Medicaid funded) organizations along the way. I could stand up here and tell you the heart-wrenching things we've had to endure and the many, MANY ways that people, especially the 3 case managers we've had along the way, have given us that boost to pull ourselves up by the bootstraps. I know there are a lot of these stories today and I think it's important to remember that each and every one of them is the lives or your Montanan citizens. People who share this great state of ours, people whom it is your jobs to protect. *families, who are people, not figures in a ledger that need to be balanced.*

I have lived in Montana my whole life, and I am a true Montana lady! I grew up on a small homestead outside of Missoula where we raised goats, sheep, pigs, chickens, grew vegetables and fruit trees. We churned butter and made our own soap and candles. We did it all. When we were faced with a problem we strapped on our big girl boots and got to work. This is how I was raised, and the part of me that is proud to be from Montana. I am a hard working, tough as nails, unafraid to get dirty problem-solving Montana Girl, and damn proud of it! I think a common misconception about the people that these cuts are really hurting is that we are lazy, unemployed, living off the government, waste of space, scourge of society type of people. I have been working with at risk families and disabled adults for the last 8 years of my life and I am here to tell you that that is so far from true. These are the citizens who were handed a difficult first hand and have to work even harder just to accomplish the things those of you without poverty and or disability often take for granted. Like waking up and getting dressed. but we do it, every day, we push ourselves every day. Programs like targeted case management are paramount in these moments because Case managers provide support and help clients prioritize and manage their goals. When the obstacles you have to overcome could rival a jaunt up Mount Everest, It is important to have a guide and a plan to be successful. Without these plans, many Montana citizens would be lost. Which leads me to my concluding question for you. I am not an accountant so maybe you could help me out with this one...

My children have a school-based therapeutic team, which is a therapist and a behavior specialist, we have a home-based treatment team, which is a therapist, support specialist (which is like community rehab), and a case manager. They are both on IEP's and thrive in their special education settings at school. They have an APRN which they see every 3 months, a PCP who they see as needed, but at least once per year, and a dentist they see twice per year. I did a little research and found that they ~~each~~ use about 70-80 hours of services billed to medicaid per month, which is about \$5000 of Montana Tax payer money. (for which I am incredibly grateful) I know that sounds like a lot, and it is, but here's the alternative. If my children didn't have the team they have to help them maintain stability, my son, I'm sure of it would be in Juvenile detention and my daughter would be in a state hospital, or dead... which would mean I would be in a state hospital.

If my son went to pine hills or riverside, he would cost Montana tax payers \$400-\$730/day, or 73,000-112,000 per year, and that was in 2014... I imagine those numbers have gone up in the past 3 years, but that's the newest report I could find. When he stayed at ACADIA in Butte last year for 4 months it cost over \$1000/day.

If you strip the funding for the programs who keep our neediest Montana citizens off the streets, healthy and fed, they will have no choice but to turn to crime and/or emergency services. The average cost per person, ~~per~~ day in a state prison is 55,000 for women and 78,000 for men (again from 2014, I'm sure those numbers are higher now)

I am no accountant and I don't want to come here and tell you how to do your jobs, but PLEASE explain to me how 5000/mo (which is way above average) is worse than \$70-100 thousand/year. Please consider the risk you are taking by making these cuts, and I'm not just talking about the people you will be throwing to the wolves, but the massive increase in expenses that you'll be creating for Montana tax-payers. ~~(you know, you~~

~~guys.)~~ *Please reconsider, There has got to be another area in the budget that can fluctuate without such dire consequences. for every single not citizen.*
Thank you so much for your time.
-Jody Wilder

Handwritten

Please remember, there has got to be another way
in the United States that can flourish without such
inconveniences. I think you, so much for you give
regards to your mother and father.